

## SPEAK UP

Here's how these Lauderdale County natives answered the question, "What would you miss most if you had to go serve in Iraq?"

"T.V."

**Matt Butler, 16**  
student

"Friends and family."

**Jeff Brantley, 19**  
student

"I'd miss my friends and family and peace at home."

**Gary James, 17**  
student

"My bulldog."

**Kim Davis, 33**  
teacher

"My fiancé, Stacey, and my family."

**Matt Davis, 22**  
student

*Megan McMullen compiled this Speak Up question. She is a sophomore at Southeast Lauderdale High School, where she plays on the softball team. Her parents are Tim and Lori McMullen and she has a sister, Stacey, who is a student at Meridian Community College. Megan plans to pursue a career in a computer-related field.*



Brantley



## TWO LOCATIONS

Cathy Carpenter has owned the Bible Bookstore, at 820 23rd Ave., since 1994 — and opened a second location at Bonita Lakes Mall in 1997.

PHOTO BY STEVE GILLESPIE  
THE MERIDIAN STAR

## Business profile ...

# Bible Bookstore

We asked Meridian business owners to fill out questionnaires about themselves and their work. Some questions were serious, some were just for fun.

Cathy Carpenter is the owner of two Bible Bookstore locations, in one downtown Meridian and one at Bonita Lakes Mall.

She and her husband, Bill, live in the Suqualena community and attend Westwood Baptist Church. They have three sons — 26-year-old Will, 25-year-old Matthew and 14-year-old Peter.

Cathy is a Sunday School teacher and a member of the Meridian Downtown Association.

By Cathy Carpenter  
special to The Star

### First, the fun

A movie about my life and work would be called "All in the Family" because my mother-in-law works here, my father works here and my two oldest sons work here.

### My business

• We supply Christian books, Bibles, gifts and music.

## I CAN'T IMAGINE

- A day without water.
- A week without reading my Bible and having a quiet time with my Lord.
- A year without seeing my family.

• How it started? Jack Bynum and Malcolm Lewis opened it in the spring of 1975. It was later purchased by Bob Rawls. I bought it from him in October 1994. The second location opened in October 1997.

• No. of employees: 18

### What I think

- The best piece of professional advice I ever received was from my grandmother, Linnie Denton, who said, "Work hard and do your best."
- What I look for in employees is honesty, integrity and a sweet spirit. The employee who's been with me the longest is Lorraine Popejoy, our salesperson, who has worked here since before I bought the Bible Bookstore.

• The best thing that happened at my business this year was my oldest son, Will, came back to work here and my middle son, Matthew, began working here.

• The biggest challenge my business faces in the coming year is the day-to-day challenges of getting people's special orders on time.

### A letter from home

• Has Sept. 11 and the U.S. War on Terror changed this country? Yes. It's made us realize we need to pray more and return to our Christian values.

• Has it touched my family's life? We know a number of people who have been deployed. It makes us appreciate what they are doing for us and the sacrifices they and their families have made.

• Has it affected my business? Right after Sept. 11, we sold a lot more Bibles. We're still selling a lot of those and we sell a lot of books that talk about how the Middle East will play into end-time prophecies.

• My message for the troops: We're keeping you in our prayers and want to know how very much we appreciate your service.

# Man with a mission

Danielle Jones is a sophomore at Southeast Lauderdale High School. Her story is about 22-year-old Leavy E. Shoffner Jr., assistant unit chaplain for the Mississippi Army National Guard's 367th Maintenance Company of Philadelphia.

By Danielle Jones  
special to The Star

Two years ago, I met a person who became one of my role models. His name is Leavy E. Shoffner Jr. When I met him, he was working as the chaplain at the same summer camp where I was working.

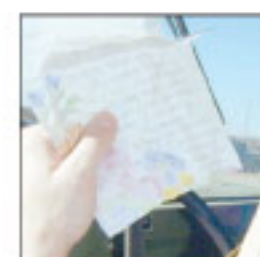
When the summer was over, he went back to being a teacher's aide at Neshoba County Middle School, helping teach grades 6-8. He also went back to being the youth leader at Beacon Street Baptist Church in Philadelphia. Not only was he a teacher's aide and a youth leader, he was also in the military.

Not long after school had started that year,

his unit, the 367th Maintenance Company, was called to go overseas. He was gone from home for 18 months, but only spent 12 months overseas. He served as the assistant unit chaplain and the material storage handler in a warehouse.

He returned home not too long ago. When I asked him what he missed most while he was gone, he said he missed his family, friends and working with the kids at church and school.

I know he's happy to be home and I'm happy to have him back.



Read Jarrod Moulds' story,

**"That Sweet Sound,"**

on the cover of the Homes section.